

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District Office

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Project Lead: Perry Wickham

Field Office: Sierra Front

Lead Office: Sierra Front

Case File/Project Number: NVN 091563 (Old Number 0 010060)

Applicable Categorical Exclusion: 516 DM 11.5 E (9) "Renewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations."

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2014-0020-CX

Project Name: Carson-Yerington Brunswick to Anaconda Overhead Line/ROW Renewal

Project Description: Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPC) has applied for the renewal of an existing Right-of-Way (ROW) grant, NVN 091563, for an existing 60kV Over Head (O/H) power line that was constructed in April, 1960. The existing authorization expired on March 31, 2010 and so the BLM will need to convert the pre-FLPMA ROW Grant to a FLPMA ROW Grant authorization. The existing O/H distribution power line begins in the SE quarter of the section and continues for 29.7 miles in length and 50 feet in width. The O/H distribution line is currently operational and will remain in use after the grant is re-issued. The original ROW was issued to SPPC on April 1, 1960 for a term of fifty (50) years. The conversion of the pre-FLPMA to a FLPMA authorization would be for a term of thirty (30) years.

Does the project include new surface disturbing activities? ☐Yes ☒No

Is the project located within preliminary general habitat for sage-grouse? ☐Yes ☒No

Is the project located within preliminary priority habitat for sage-grouse? ☐Yes ☒No

Is the project located within proposed critical habitat for bi-state sage-grouse? ☒Yes ☐No

On October 28, 2013 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed critical habitat for the bi-state sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). The existing transmission line crosses through approximately 11.6 miles of proposed critical habitat (the project does not cross through preliminary priority habitat). The existing transmission line runs in a northeast to southwest direction, whereas telemetry from USGS indicates that sage-grouse use along the Pine Nut crest generally runs in a north-south direction. The only known active lek in the Pine Nut Mountains occurs in the Mill Canyon unit, approximately three miles north, northeast of the transmission line.

No new surface disturbing activities would be authorized under this ROW renewal other than transmission line maintenance. The proponent has an Avian Protection Plan in place.

The BLM has determined that renewing this ROW would result in “not likely to adversely affect” determination under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for the proposed bi-state sage-grouse (effects on bi-state sage-grouse from raptor and/or raven predation are discountable, insignificant), and would result in “no effect” to the proposed critical habitat because modification to the proposed critical habitat occurred originally in 1960 when the transmission line was constructed and no additional surface-disturbing activities are proposed. Based on Nevada IM. No. NV 2014-008 “Conferencing with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Activities Potentially Affecting Species and Their Habitats Proposed for Federal Listing” the BLM has determined that no formal conferencing with USFWS is required for this ROW renewal. Therefore the BLM has determined that extraordinary circumstance question #8 (below) would not be met (answered affirmatively) and a categorical exclusion is the appropriate level of compliance for this ROW renewal.

The BLM has coordinated this ROW renewal with USFWS and the Nevada Department of Wildlife. At such time as a final listing decision is made by USFWS on the proposed listing of the bi-state sage-grouse, and proposed critical habitat, the BLM may require additional stipulations to the renewed ROW to minimize potential adverse effects to the bi-state sage-grouse (e.g. additional measures to minimize perching opportunities for raptors and/or ravens).

Applicant Name: Sierra Pacific Power Company

Project Location (include Township/Range, County): Carson City, Lyon and Douglas Counties, Mt Diablo Meridian partially or wholly in: Township 15N, Range 20E; T16N 21E; T15N 22E; T15N 23E; T14N 23E; T14N 24E; T13N 25E.

BLM Acres for the Project Area: 359.73

Land Use Plan Conformance (cite reference/page number): Page LND-7 states, “non-bureau initiated realty proposals would be considered where analysis indicates they are beneficial to the public.”

Name of Plan: NV – Carson City RMP.


Screening of Extraordinary Circumstances: The following extraordinary circumstances apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (43 CFR 46.215). The BLM has considered the following criteria:

<i>If any question is answered 'yes' an EA or EIS must be prepared.</i>	YES	NO
1. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on public health or safety?		X
2. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds (EO 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas?		X
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources?		X
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		X
5. Would the Proposed Action establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		X
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?		X
7. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the NRHP as determined by the bureau or office?		X
8. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the list of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		X
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		X
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)?		X
11. Would the Proposed Action limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)?		X
12. Would the Proposed Action contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112)?		X


CONCLUSION: Based upon the review of this Proposed Action, I have determined that the above-described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the LUP, and does not require an EA or EIS.

Approved by:

ACTING
FOL



Leon Thomas
Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office



(date)

Does this CX constitute the decision document for this Proposed Action? ☐ Yes ☒ No